through the Central Ministries and Departments under various Central and Centrally-Sponsored Schemes.

All the above sources of financing to the States are targeted to achieve their allround balanced economic development and reduction in income inequalities between the States.

News-item, "Priest fire over Dalit marriage"

2623. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Goverment's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Priest fire over Dalit marriage", which appreared in the Indian Express, dated the 28th August, 2002;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that a Brahmin priest was forced out of his job and home in Khazane village in goa for performing marriage of a Dalit couple in his temple;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted to ascertain the facts; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against the culprits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The requisite information is being obtained from the Government of Goa and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Rehabilitation programme for beggars

2624. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any action-plan to check begging, particularly begging by children in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether any rehabilitation programme is there for the beggars; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Government has taken a number of measures to check begging, including beggary by children, as also for the rehabilitation of beggars (including child beggars). Some of these measures are enactment of legislations by State Governments and Union territory Administrations, provisions of punishment for the persons employing or using a child for begging. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 addresses the needs of all children in need of care, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Besides, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is implementing, since 1992-93, a Central Sector scheme called, 'An Integrated Programme for Street Children. The objective of this programme is to prevent destitution of children and facilitate their withdrawal from a life on the streets and their social reintegration. The programme provides for shelter, nutrition, health care, education and recreation faciliities to street children and seeks to protect them against abuse and exploitation including forced beggary. Under this scheme, the Ministry is also providing financial assistance to CHILDLINE Service, which is a 24 hour free phone service for children in distress. It can be accessed by a child in difficulty or an adult on his behalf by dialing 1098. The basic objective of this service is to respond to children in emergency situation and to refer them to relevant governmental and non-governmental organisation, which facilitate the rehabilitation of children in especially difficult circumstances including child beggars.

Funds for welfare schemes in Bihar

†2625. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocated to Bihar for implementation of welfare schemes during the last two years;

(b) the funds out of this actually utilised by the State of Bihar; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by Government for proper utilisation of these funds?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.